

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1 through 20 are pending. Claims 1 through 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as not providing a useful, concrete, tangible result. Claims 1 through 4 stand rejected for lack of novelty under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) in view of US Patent Appl. 2003/0088536 to *Behnia*. Claims 5 and 7 through 20 stand rejected for lack of novelty under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) in view of US Patent Appl. 2004/0174392 to *Bjoernsen*. Claim 6 stands rejected as obvious in view of *Bjoernsen* and US Patent 7,039,596 to *Lu*. No new matter is submitted in the amendments to the claims.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, and 18 are independent.

The amended claims traverse rejection for lack of novelty and obviousness in light of all art of record.

Rejection under §101

The amended claims each recite a useful, concrete, tangible result. In *State Street*, cited by the Examiner, a datum corresponding to “price” was determined to meet the useful, concrete, and tangible result criteria facilitating trading in the real world. In the present case, *inter alia*, data of an affiliation meets the useful, concrete, and tangible result criteria because, for example, after presentation as recited in the claims, the user is able to take appropriate action in the real world such as performing a task, attending a meeting, or exchanging information with another person.

Rejections under §102 and §103

The Examiner has taken the position that *Behnia* teaches every limitation of independent claim 1. The Examiner has also taken the position that *Bjoernsen* teaches every limitation of independent claims 5, 7, 9, 13, and 18. Further, the Examiner has taken the position that *Bjoernsen* teaches every limitation of claim 6 except “the second multiplicity includes at least one field value of the first multiplicity and at least one field value not of the first multiplicity”. *Lu* is cited to supply that limitation.

As discussed below, because all of the independent claims recite at least one limitation not found in any of *Behnia*, *Bjoernsen*, nor *Lu*, a *prima facie* case has not been made for lack of novelty nor obviousness. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Applicant has coined the word ‘affiliation’ to have a meaning for information processing as discussed in the originally filed specification, drawing, and claims. An affiliation as recited in the claims refers to information organized for use in an information system. Such information describes relations between persons herein called affiliates (e.g., see, Specification para. [0024]). In one embodiment, such information includes the data and relations portrayed in FIG. 4 together with Table 1. Practice of the embodiment of FIG. 4 and Table 1 is disclosed by Applicant in terms of a conventional database manager process that manipulates tables having records, records having fields, and fields having particular values. Other embodiments are discussed elsewhere in the Specification.

To find an affiliation manager or an equivalent in a reference, the Examiner must at least find a unit of information corresponding to an affiliation; and find a process that manages a plurality of affiliations. Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 13 recite an “identified affiliation” indicating that the unit of information corresponding to an affiliation must have an identifier.

Turning to the specification, Applicant has distinguished an affiliation from other units of information in singular and in plural. Here are a few representative examples of the conceptual difference between an affiliation and units of information that may be found in the references of record. An affiliation is not merely a person, or merely a location, or merely a resource, or merely an item (appointment or task), or merely a project, or merely an account, or merely a disbursement, or merely an extract, or merely a folder, or merely a subject, or merely a note. Because a plurality of any one of these does not make an affiliation, an affiliation is not merely a contact list, or merely a map, or merely a list of resources, or merely a task list, or merely an appointment calendar, or merely a hierarchy of projects, or merely a system of accounts, or merely a schedule of disbursements, or merely a set of extracts, or merely a system of folders, or merely a dictionary of subjects, or merely a pad of notes.

In the claims, the information units described for persons, items, and sessions are distinguished from an information unit called an “identified affiliation”. Consequently, finding corresponding teachings for persons, items, and sessions, does not meet the limitation of “identified affiliation”.

Behnia describes “knowledge objects” as “an object [is] a self-contained piece of software having data and procedures” (para. [0015]). *Behnia* describes classes as a hierarchical organization of objects (para. [0023]). The parent-child relationships in the hierarchy are generally determined during the design phase. (para. [96]). The hierarchy of *Behnia* is generally one to many. The primary hierarchy is account-policy-claim. (para. [0080]). And below claim is “project”. The only relationships between persons are described as relationships between “contacts” within a “project” (para. [0244-0253]). Users are assigned to projects (para. [0235]). There is nothing in *Behnia* that has the function nor structure of an “identified affiliation”, as claimed.

The Examiner has mischaracterized a “project” of *Behnia* as teaching an affiliation as claimed. Assuming solely for the sake of this argument that a project of *Behnia* has structures and functions of a project disclosed by Applicant, an affiliation as described by Applicant may refer to or include one or more projects. Consequently, an affiliation provides different structure and function than an object of the project class taught by *Behnia*.

One of the results provided by an affiliation manager is reduced risk of conflicts arising from physical limitations (e.g., time and place) and limitations on resources (e.g., expense budgets) (see Specification para. [0025]).

Applicant has coined the word ‘item’ to have a meaning for information processing as discussed in the originally filed specification, drawing, and claims. An item as recited in the claims refers to information organized for use in an information system. Such information describes a task or appointment and related information affecting risk of various conflicts (Specification para. [0026, 0046, 0047]). In one embodiment, such information includes the data and relations portrayed in FIG. 7 together with Table 1. Practice of the embodiment of FIG. 7 and Table 1 is disclosed by Applicant in terms of a conventional database manager process that manipulates tables having records, records having fields, and fields having particular values. Other embodiments are discussed elsewhere in the Specification.

To find an affiliation manager or an equivalent in a reference, the Examiner must at least find a unit of information corresponding to an item; and find a process that manages a plurality of items. Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 13 recite a “plurality of records wherein each record ... describes a respective item”. Claim 18 recites, “a list of items”.

Turning to the specification, Applicant has distinguished an item from other units of information in singular and in plural. Here are a few representative examples of the conceptual difference between an item and units of information that may be found in the references of record. An item is not a person, or a location, or a resource, or a project, or an account, or a disbursement, or an extract, or a folder, or a subject, or a note. Because a plurality of any one of these does not make an item, an item is not a contact list, or a map, or a list of resources, or a task list, or an appointment calendar, or a hierarchy of projects, or a system of accounts, or a schedule of disbursements, or a set of extracts, or a system of folders, or a dictionary of subjects, or a pad of notes.

In the claims, the information units described for persons, sessions, and affiliations are distinguished from an information unit called an “item”. Consequently, finding corresponding teachings for persons, sessions, and affiliations, does not meet the limitation of “item”.

The Examiner has mischaracterized various descriptions in *Bjoernsen* as teaching an item as claimed. In *Bjoernsen* a room may include facilities for collaboration named for a project (e.g., Development Turbine Z40 of FIG. 12); however, there is no mention of the collection of costs for a project. In *Bjoernsen*, there is no plurality of units of information corresponding to items as claimed. The only mention of cost is insufficient, to wit, in para. [0036] where “the cost of the [collaboration] session may be assigned to a particular user”. Other costs are not accounted for.

Lu does not supply a teaching of “affiliation” or “item”.

There is no suggestion to combine the teachings of *Behnia*, *Bjoernsen*, and *Lu*.

Conclusion

An extension of time believed to be 2 months is respectfully requested. Fees for the extension of time for a small entity (believed to be \$225) are submitted herewith.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Applicant believes the case is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if it would in any way advance prosecution of this case.

Please revise the correspondence address to the new address shown below.



Date: March 5, 2007

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William R. Bachand".

William R. Bachand
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